Plastic Crate FAQs

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

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What's the difference between a crate and a cage?
Crates and cages are rather similar. However, crates are generally more portable than cages, and they're typically made of plastic (whereas cages are typically made of metal). Crates are invaluable when you want to easily, conveniently transport your pet. Similar to cages, crates also work well in providing your dog with an indoor home of his own, in housetraining puppies, and in helping to prevent negative behavior resulting from loneliness and separation anxiety. The choice between a crate or a cage often depends largely on the amount and kind of traveling you plan to do, as well as simple personal preference. You may wish to invest in both, especially if you plan to leave a crate in the car for frequent use.
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What are the different types of crates?
Drs. Foster & Smith offers several different styles and sizes of plastic crates to fit all sizes and breeds of dogs. Some of our crates have removable tops, allowing the crate to double as a bed. Some fold down for ultimate portability. Some have doors that open on one side only, while others have reversible doors that may be set to open from either the left or the right. And while most models offer three-side ventilation, some models provide ventilation on all four sides. For details on our crates, see our crate selection guide.
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Must I use a crate if I plan to take my pet on an airplane?
Most major airlines now require plastic crates such as Drs. Foster & Smith Pet Dens and Vari-Kennels Ultra to safely transport animals - especially large animals who cannot travel in the cabin with you. When making your travel arrangements, be sure to let your airline know you plan to bring your pet, and ask for details on the styles and sizes of crates they allow.
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What size crate should I choose for my pet?
Before you select a crate, measure your pet to be sure you select the right size. Measure from the floor to the top of your pet's shoulder, and add 3 inches; this is the minimum height for your pet's crate. Next, measure from his head to the base of his tail, and add 3 inches; this is the minimum length for his crate. Make sure that your pet can comfortably stand, sit, turn around, and lie down in it. As a general rule, when selecting a crate for an adult dog, if you're not sure which size to select, lean toward a larger size.
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Which crates are appropriate for large dogs?
Drs. Foster & Smith offers many different styles and sizes of crates. One model in particular - Vari-Kennels Ultra offer large and extra large models which are suited for large dogs such as collies, retrievers, Dobermans, and large labs. As always, be sure to measure your dog to determine which size crate will be the most comfortable.
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Which crates are appropriate for active dogs?
While all plastic crates can effectively hold active dogs, you may wish to consider a Vari-Kennels Ultra crate if your dog is particularly active.
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How durable are your crates?
Our plastic crates are extremely durable and safe - constructed to withstand the rigors of daily use, automobile travel, and airline travel.

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Can I stack crates?
In most instances, you can stack crates without worry. However, exercise good judgment in stacking crates - stack with the largest size on the lowest level, and always keep crates containing extremely active animals on the ground.
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Do I need to continue using my crate after my dog has been housebroken/crate-trained?
Chances are your pet will become very comfortable in his crate, and - when the door is left open - he'll come and go under his own free will. He'll look to his crate as a cozy refuge - a place to "hide out" when he's stressed, tired, or simply wishes to be alone. If your dog shows little interest in his crate once he's housebroken/trained, and has found his own special "home" (under your dining room table, for example) you may still wish to keep it for use in traveling.
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